DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 827 SP 022 741

AUTHOR Bell, T. H.
TITLE Some Thoughts on a Strategy for Attaining Excellence in American Education.
INSTITUTION Department of Education, Washington, DC. Office of the Secretary.
PUB DATE 13 May 83
NOTE 32p.; Speech presented at the presentation of award to Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Strategies; Educational Finance; Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; *Educational Responsibility; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Regulation; *Federal State Relationship; Higher Education; *Leadership Responsibility; *Local Government; Master Teachers; Preservice Teacher Education; Schools of Education; State Boards of Education
IDENTIFIERS *National Commission on Excellence in Education

ABSTRACT

Responding to the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report on the status of education in the United States, Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, addresses six questions: (1) Given that the Commission discussed the federal, state, local, parental, and student roles and responsibilities, who should take the lead in education? (2) How can we do violence to the "status quo" on the local grassroots level? (3) What is the federal responsibility? (4) How shall we finance the sweeping reforms called for by the National Commission? (5) How do we solve the teacher competence problem? and (6) What is the role of higher education in promoting excellence? Besides answering these questions, Secretary Bell also concludes by offering 12 challenges to states, universities, parents, communities, and professional organizations. (JMK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by ELRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Final

FR

SP

ED231827

SPEECH DELIVERED BY T. H. BELL

U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON TEACHING

MAY 13, 1983 - 9:45 A.M.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SP022 741

Some Thoughts on a Strategy for Attaining Excellence in American Education

This will be my first official response to the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. We selected Michigan State University as the setting for this response because this institution has been deeply involved in research on effective schools and because Michigan State is the sponsoring university of our federally-funded Institute of Research on Teaching. Additionally, we are all aware of the traditional high commitment to education found in Michigan and the surrounding States in this region. We know that recently this region has been feeling the staggering blows of an economy that is undergoing radical change. This change adds to the urgency we all feel for reform in education. Indeed education and growth are linked in many people's minds. The future of America and all it stands for is at risk and, inexorably tied to excellence in education...

Because of recent breakthroughs in communication and transportation, the world has become what the Commission referred to as "one global village." This international community is increasingly populated with tough ideological, technological and economic competitors. The Commission accurately said: "We live among determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors."

To that I say great! For when have Americans been afraid of competition, and a new challenge? Especially one that contains an educational component.

Since the Commission's report came out, many have asked me why the President wants to abolish the Department of Education and replace it with another structure more suitable to the Federal role. Some of you in this audience may believe that this Administration has failed to befriend education. You may have been told that we are anti-education, that our budget reductions--in the interest of an economic recovery--have been Draconian, that the commitment of the President to dismantle the Department is shortsighted.

I want to quote what former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Joseph Califano has to say about education in recounting his experience in the creation of the Department. "I came to HEW enthusiastic about the opportunity to improve education in America, and determined to step Federal funding sharply." "I left" he says, "alarmed over the deterioration of public education in America and troubled by the threat of academic freedom that the Federal role, enlarged and shaped by special interests, poses."

PLEASE NOTE THE PRESENT TENSE OF THE VERB "POSE." THIS ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO REDEFINING THE FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION IN WAYS THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF EDUCATORS AND PARENTS. PRESIDENT REAGAN, ON RECEIVING THE COMMISSION REPORT I PRESENTED TO HIM AT THE WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH, REMARKED THAT HE WAS HEARTENED ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH HIS PLEDGE TO REDEFINE OUR PRESENCE IN EDUCATION. THE COMMISSION REPORT OUTLINES A LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND A SPECIFIC ROLE IN PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS, EDUCATION OF THE DISADVANTAGED AND THE HANDICAPPED, STUDENT ASSISTANCE, AND KEY AREAS OF NATIONAL NEED. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THE COMMISSION STATES, SHOULD IDENTIFY AND FUND PROGRAMS THAT ARE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST IN EDUCATION.

THIS ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED, FOR THE EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTATED, TO STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES AND THE MAJORITY ALIKE, TO RESEARCH IN KEY AREAS, AND TO THE LEADERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE THE PRESIDENT HAS EXERCISED FOR YEARS. NO ONE SHOULD FORGET THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN CREATED THIS COMMISSION TO MAKE ITS REPORT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THIS IS IN AND OF ITSELF AN EXERCISE OF LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION THAT HAS NOT HAD ANY EQUAL IN WASHINGTON FOR YEARS.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION TO THE NATION'S FUTURE WAS PORTRAYED BY THE COMMISSION AS FOLLOWS:

"KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING, INFORMATION, AND SKILLED INTELLIGENCE ARE THE NEW RAW MATERIALS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE;" THEY ARE IN FACT THE INTELLECTUAL KEYS TO AN INFORMATION AGE AND A LEARNING SOCIETY. IF THIS STATE AND YOUR NEIGHBORING STATES SUCCEED IN MAINTAINING AND ESTABLISHING A VIABLE MODERNIZED ECONOMY SO THE PEOPLE LIVING HERE CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE GOOD LIFE, IT CAN ONLY COME ABOUT BY AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD RENEWAL OF THE CAPACITY OF YOUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. THEY WILL HELP THIS REGION ATTAIN THE SOPHISTICATED INTELLIGENCE AND HUMAN PRODUCTIVITY SO NECESSARY FOR THE YEARS AHEAD. NOT ONLY DOES THE MIDWEST COMPETE WITH THE JAPANESE AND OTHER EMERGING, HIGHLY LITERATE AND TECHNICALLY COMPETENT PEOPLE, IT ALSO MUST CONTEND WITH THE AGRESSIVE SUNBELT AS AN ECONOMIC RIVAL INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. THE FUTURE WILL BELONG TO THE BRIGHT AND ENERGETIC PEOPLE RESIDING IN COUNTRIES WHERE LEARNING IS CHERISHED AND ENCOURAGED AND WHERE SKILLED INTELLIGENCE IS AVAILABLE IN RICH ABUNDANCE.

"HISTORY," THE COMMISSION REPORT REMINDS US, "IS NOT KIND TO IDLERS." IF WE DON'T MAKE THE HEROIC STEPS, OUR INDUSTRIALIZED- URBAN SOCIETY COULD GO THE WAY OF OTHERS IN THIS CENTURY, LEAVING US, BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, AS A SECOND RATE 'HAS BEEN' DECLINING COUNTRY. FOR MOST CERTAINLY, WE WILL BE SURPASSED BY OUR COMPETITORS WHO ARE WILLING TO WORK HARDER, STUDY MORE DIFFICULT SUBJECTS AND APPLY INTELLIGENCE TO THE PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME WITH A DILIGENCE AND INGENUITY THAT WAS ONCE CONSIDERED AN AMERICAN MONOPOLY.

FOLLOWING ARE QUESTIONS TO WHICH WE MUST BE SEEKING ANSWERS:

1. GIVEN THAT THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED THE FEDERAL, STATE LOCAL, PARENTAL, AND STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN A VERY COMPLEX, DECENTRALIZED, AND DIVERSIFIED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION THAT SERVES A VERY LARGE AND COMPLEX NATION THAT IS NOW FACING AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE TO ITS TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC SUPREMACY AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP?

AS WE SURVEY THE CONDITION OF AMERICAN EDUCATION, WE MUST ASK THE AGE-OLD QUESTION THAT IS ALWAYS ASKED WHEN WE ARE IN TROUBLE: WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

MY EMPHATIC REPLY TO THIS QUESTION IS THAT THE 50 STATES ARE IN CHARGE! I HASTEN TO ADD THAT WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE AND WE ALL HAVE A VERY HEAVY AND SOBERING RESPONSIBILITY.

I WOULD NOT EXCUSE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NOR DO I IMPLY THAT SOME BLAME CANNOT BE FIXED THERE. THE 16,000 LOCAL UNITS (THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS) CREATED BY THE 50 STATE LEGISLATURES ARE ALSO RESPONSIBLE. PARENTS AND STUDENTS OBVIOUSLY MUST BE SADDLED WITH A HEAVIER LOAD THAN THEY HAVE BEEN CARRYING. (TO GRASP THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DUTY OF BOTH PARENTS AND STUDENTS, READ AGAIN THE MESSAGES TO THEM ON PAGES 34 THROUGH 36 OF THE COMMISSION REPORT.) AND OF COURSE, STUDENTS WILL HAVE TO DO THEIR PART BY STUDYING HARDER, TAKING FEWER EASY COURSES, AND DOING MORE HOMEWORK - EVEN ON WEEKENDS.

FOLLOWING IS MY RATIONALE FOR SAYING THAT THE STATE ARE IN CHARGE:

A. THE STATE LEGISLATURES CREATED THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE NATION AND THEY ESTABLISHED THE PULIC SYSTEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

NINETY-TWO PERCENT OF THE MONEY APPROPRIATED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS EITHER FINANCED DIRECTLY BY STATE LEGISLATURES OR RAISED BY LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES UNDER LEVYING AUTHORITY SET BY THE LAWS ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURES.

B. STATE LEGISLATURES EACH YEAR ENACT NEW LAWS THAT GOVERN THE SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES. THE CHANGES WE MUST MAKE CANNOT BE ATTAINED WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE, DIRECTION, AND SUPPORT FROM OUR STATE LEGISLATURES. WHETHER YOU LIKE THIS OR NOT -- THAT IS THE WAY IT IS. SOME STATE LAWS HAVE MORE TO SAY ABOUT PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, BUT THEY ALL HAVE SOME INPUT AND INFLUENCE ON THEM.

C. EACH YEAR THE 50 GOVERNORS PREPARE BUDGETS, RECOMMEND LEGISLATION, AND INITIATE THE AGENDA FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION. THE GOVERNORS CAN AND DO HAVE A POWERFUL IMPACT ON THE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. GOVERNORS CAN KEEP BEFORE THE PUBLIC THE NEED TO BUILD EXCELLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS; REFORM TEACHER PERSONNEL, CERTIFICATION AND SALARY POLICIES; AND, CHANGE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS. STRONG, ACTIVE, AND ASSERTIVE GOVERNORS CAN BE (AND MANY ARE) POWERFUL INFLUENCES FOR EDUCATION REFORM. THEY CAN HONOR TEACHERS, ENCOURAGE AND ADMONISH SCHOOL BOARDS AND ADMINISTRATORS, AND USE THE VAST PERSUASIVE POWERS OF THEIR OFFICES TO MOVE EDUCATION FORWARD -- <u>IF THEY WILL</u>!

D. CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS AND STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION HAVE MANY OF THE OPPORTUNITIES I HAVE JUST ATTRIBUTED TO GOVERNORS. WHAT IS MORE, MANY OF THEM CAN, BY BOARD RESOLUTION, CHANGE THE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHERS, UPGRADE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND, GUIDE AND INFLUENCE THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS AND SUPERINTENDENTS. THEY HAVE VAST POWERS OF PERSUASION AS WELL AS CONSIDERABLE LEGAL AUTHORITY. THE SITUATION VARIES FROM ONE STATE TO ANOTHER, BUT AS A GROUP, THE CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS AND STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION HAVE THE POWER TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE AND REFORM. TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNORS, STATE LEGISLATURES, AND LOCALLY ELECTED SCHOOL BOARDS (OPERATING UNDER STATE LAW), THE STATE EDUCATION OFFICIALS OUGHT TO BE MORE ASSERTIVE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST! WE ALL NEED TO BE PROVIDING BETTER LEADERSHIP THAN HAS BEEN GIVEN IN THE PAST, BUT IT HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY LACKING ON THE STATE LEVEL IN MANY STATES.

TO SUMMARIZE MY CASE FOR SAYING THE STATES ARE IN CHARGE, I EMPHASIZE THAT EDUCATION IS THE FOREMOST RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATES AND IT WILL REMAIN SO UNLESS WE MAKE RADICAL CHANGES IN OUR STRUCTURE AND BEGIN TO ASSERT FEDERAL CONTROL AND FINANCING OF OUR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. THIS WOULD, AS I SEE IT, BE A VERY TRAGIC MOVE THAT HARMS EDUCATION RATHER THAN HELPS.

As I have said so often, Education is to the individual states as national defense is to the Federal Government. I have faith that our system of State responsibility for education will work if we can get governors, State legislatures, chief State school officers, and State boards of education to do their duty. They simply must get off their dimes and exert additional leadership.

The Need for Planning and Evaluation

Every state should have a Master plan for attaining excellence in education. This plan should be a realistic, dynamic, and results-oriented document. If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. We have not known where we were going in American Education and we have not been getting anywhere as a result.

THE REPORT OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION STATED, AS I MENTIONED BEFORE: "HISTORY IS NOT KIND TO IDLERS." THIS ADMONITION CAN BE APPLIED TO MORE THAN STUDENTS AS WE CONSIDER THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN AMERICA. WE MUST PLAN, IMPLEMENT, EVALUATE, AND REVISE. WHEN THIS CYCLE IS COMPLETED, WE SHOULD DO IT AND AGAIN. A COMPREHENSIVE FITNESS REPORT OF EACH STATE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC AND THE LEGISLATURE. WHEN PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED, PERFORMANCE IMPROVES. WHEN PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED AND THE RESULTS ARE FED BACK, THE RATE OF IMPROVEMENT ACCELERATES.

I. "WHO'S IN CHARGE?"

1. MY FIRST QUESTION HAS BEEN: WHO'S IN CHARGE? AND MY ANSWER IS THE STATES. BUT WE CANNOT STOP THERE BECAUSE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS SOME RESPONSIBILITY AS DO LOCAL COMMUNITIES, PARENTS, STUDENTS, PRIVATE SECTOR AND OTHERS WHO HAVE A STAKE IN THE FUTURE OF THE NATION.

II. The Role of School Boards. My second question is: How can we do violence to the "status quo" on the local grassroots level?

We must begin with the local school board. More than most of us realize, school boards shape our future either by their action, inaction, or ineptness. Show me a school board that is active, assertive, and committed to a master plan, and I will show you a community that is blessed with great schools.

The key to all of this is, of course, leadership. The school board ought to either have an unusually capable superintendent who is a mover and a shaker or, it ought to fire its chief executive officer and get one that measures up. A community cannot tolerate schools that do not educate the children by holding them to reasonably high and tolerablly tough standards. A community should therefore not tolerate a weak-kneed school board and an incompetent, visionless superintendent.

As I see it, the local school board should:

A. EMPLOY A CAPABLE AND DYNAMIC LEADER FOR SUPERINTENDENT AND KEEP HIM OR HER ONLY SO LONG AS HE OR SHE REMAINS SO. WITHOUT STRENGTH AT THE TOP, THE GAME IS LOST AT THE OUTSET.

B. SET DOWN HARD-NOSED POLICIES THAT TELL PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND FACULTY WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM. THIS SHOULD BE IN WRITING, AND THE PROSE SHOULD BE EASY TO INTERPRET. EVERY SCHOOL BOARD OUGHT TO PRESCRIBE THE COURSEWORK FOR GRADUATION FROM THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS OUGHT TO BE GIVEN TO MEASURE THE RESULTS. DISTINGUISHED PERFORMANCE OUGHT TO BE RECOGNIZED IN TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS.

C. SPECIFY THAT EVERY SCHOOL IN THE SYSTEM MUST BE LED BY A PRINCIPAL SELECTED FOR HIS OR HER DYNAMIC QUALITIES TO LEAD; TO TOLERATE NO SHODDINESS; AND TO DEMAND THE BEST. THIS SHOULD BE MADE QUITE CLEAR IN THE BOARD POLICIES. PRINCIPALS SHOULD NOT EXPECT TO REMAIN FOR YEARS IN THE SAME SCHOOL, AND THE SUPERINTENDENT SHOULD BE THE LIVELY ROOSTER THAT KEEPS EACH SCHOOL BLESSED WITH THE BENEFIT OF CREATIVE TENSION.

SCHOOL BOARDS SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS SCHOOLS BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE POWER TO HIRE AND FIRE ALL THOSE WHO ARE IN CHARGE. SCHOOL BOARDS NEED BOTH THE SUPPORT AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM OF THE PRESS. SOME NEWSPAPERS IN SOME COMMUNITIES SEEM TO TOLERATE MEDIOCRITY AND MALFEASANCE OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN SCHOOLS. MOREOVER, SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS USUALLY GET THE HO-HUM TREATMENT OF THE PRESS. THERE ARE NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS TO THIS, OF COURSE. SOME COMMUNITIES ARE BLESSED WITH A PRESS THAT CONSTANTLY DEMANDS THE BEST IN EDUCATION. THE PRESS RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S CLARION CALL FOR EXCELLENCE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER. IF WE DO OUR PART AND MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS THAT WE MUST, I AM CONFIDENT WE WILL HAVE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT EXCELLENT EDUCATION DEMANDS.

REMEBERING THE COMMISSION'S REPORT SPEAKS TO PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS, TO PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION, AS WELL AS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES; THE GOVERNING BODIES OF PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS - WHETHER THEY BE BOARDS OF TRUSTEES, PARISH SCHOOL BOARDS OR PASTORS AND DEACONS, WE ALL SHOULD EXAMINE THE COMMISSION REPORT WITH THE INTENT OF USING THE FINDINGS AS A "SELF-STUDY" OR GUIDE TO DETERMINE IF SCHOOL OBJECTIVES AND PHILOSOPHIES ARE BEING ACHIEVED. AND, IF SO, HOW EFFECTIVELY. WE KNOW THAT PRIVATE AS WELL AS PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMIC STANDARDS ARE TOO LOW. THESE SCHOOLS ALSO NEED REFORM IN THE AREA OF TEACHER PERSONNEL PRACTICES. JUST SO WE ARE NOT MISUNDERSTOOD, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT EDUCATION IN THE PRIVATE, AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

VERY SIGNIFICANT STUDIES OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS THAT HAVE BEEN SPONSORED BY NIE AND CONDUCTED RIGHT HERE AT MSU HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT A DYNAMIC PRINCIPAL IS ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS IN ATTAINING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION. WE MUST HAVE MORE AGGRESSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.

D. REQUIRE A SYSTEM OF RECOGNIZING, REWARDING, AND MOTIVATING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO REACH THEIR "OUTER LIMITS," AS MENTIONED IN THE COMMISSION REPORT. THE POLICIES OF THE BOARD MUST DEMAND THIS. IF IT IS NOT IN WRITTEN POLICY FORMAT, IT WILL NOT HAPPEN. OUR TEACHING PROFESSION IS IN SAD SHAPE TODAY BECAUSE WE DO NOT HONOR OR PAY OUR TEACHERS AS WE SHOULD. SCHOOL BOARDS MUST PAY ATTENTION TO THIS. AS I SEE IT, THEY NEED A <u>MASTER TEACHER</u> PAY SCALE ABOVE AND BEYOND A GOOD, COMPETITIVE BASIC TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE. LET'S MAKE TEACHING MORE COMPETITIVE TO ATTRACT AND HOLD MORE TALENTED AND CREATIVE TEACHERS. IT ALL BEGINS HERE. THE SCHOOL BOARDS OUGHT TO INSIST ON MAJOR REFORM IN THIS SYSTEM INCLUDING INCENTIVES, REWARDS, AND COMPENSATION. NOW, THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO THIS REFORM WHICH IS INDISPENSABLE TO QUALITY EDUCATION IS THE TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS - UNIONS OR EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS. THEY MUST YIELD TO REASON ON THIS POINT. BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WILL BETTER OFF IF THEY DO.

In summary, I emphasize that the school board is the governing body for the school system. It ought to govern and not merely preside over what is. It needs a master plan that sets out a series of time-phased action steps leading to its community's definition of excellence.

III. The Federal Responsibility. My third question is: What is the Federal responsibility?

This question has been debated for years, indeed since the beginning of our nation. The more the States fail in their educational responsibilities, the more call there is for the Federal Government to step in. Sadly, often times the Federal Government responds and just does anything - usually with very mixed results. I largely agree with the Commission and its definition of the Federal role. (As you review the mixed backgrounds of the Commission members, it is remarkable that they unanimously arrived at the conclusions including particularly, their definition of the Federal role.)

As I see it, the Federal Government cannot ignore education. We cannot, on the Federal level, simply shrug our shoulders and say that education is a State, local, and private matter. But above all the federal role must supplement and not pre-empt the State's efforts.

Because all aspects of our nation are ultimely highly dependent upon the effectiveness of education to produce enlightened and highly literate citizens, we simply cannot have education uncoordinated and widely dispersed to the 50 States without any nation-wide perspective, or without an ability to respond to meet agreed upon national needs.

The first and most important responsibility of the Federal Government is in my opinion, to provide leadership for American education with the least possible amount of intrusion consistent with our traditions of governance and autonomy at the local and State levels and in the private sector. Lest I be misunderstood, I distinguish between <u>leadership</u> and <u>governance</u> and <u>control</u>. I argue that we can have the first without the control and interference so often associated with the federal role in the past. Congress has traditionally been too prone to lay down compelling controls. They fail to respect the rights of the States, but the States keep asking for more Congressional (and federal) intrusion as they fail to fill the void.

On the Federal level, we should gather data and monitor the needs of American education and appraise its effectiveness. We can sponsor activities such as the studies of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. We can fund research and sponsor major reseach and development projects, such as the NIE funded and Michigan State sponsored Institute for Research on Teaching.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS A VERY FIRM AND SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY TO ENFORCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LAWS. WE MUST ALSO PERSUADE THE STATES TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE.

I SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF SUPPLEMENTING BUT NOT SUPPLANTING THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION. WHERE THERE ARE DEFICIENCIES IN EDUCATION THAT ARE NATIONWIDE IN SCOPE AND WHERE THE PROBABILITIES ARE HIGH THAT SUPPLEMENTARY FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL HELP MEET THESE URGENT NEEDS, I SUPPORT FULLY THE RATIONALE FOR LIMITED AND CAREFULLY TARGETED FEDERAL AID. WHEN SUCH STANCE IS PROVIDED, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT EACH STATE HAS DIFFERENT LAWS, AND DIFFERENT FORMS OF GENERAL AND CATEGORICAL AID. THE MORE DISCRETION WE CAN GIVE THE STATES AND STILL TARGET THE ASSISTANCE ON THE PROBLEM, THE BETTER. THAT IS WHY I FAVOR BLOCK GRANTS RATHER THAN VERY COMPLEX AND PRESCRIPTIVE LAWS THAT HAVE NUMEROUS SET-ASIDES AND PRESCRIPTIONS - THE SO-CALLED CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS. ALSO, KEEP IN MIND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN HELP BY MAKING REVENUE SOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATES SO THEY CAN FILL THE VOID. IN MICHIGAN YOU RECENTLY PASSED A FAIRLY LARGE STATE INCOME TAX HIKE. THE BITE OF THIS INCREASE IS OFFSET BY THE FACT THAT ON JULY 1, THE LAST INCREMENT OF A FEDERAL 25% REDUCTION IN INCOME TAX RATES WILL BE EFFECTIVE.

As you hear me speak about the Federal role, you may be asking about the President's views and committments to education. I hear criticism from time to time about the President's commitment. Let me read you a statement made by the President back in 1978 when he was praising a county superintendent of schools:

> Education had become"...A system which deluded school children into believing they were acquiring real skills, when many of them simply were not. It was a system that encouraged teachers to believe they were doing their job, even as many students were falling further behind."

The problems the President referred to were precisely those outlined in the commission report: social promotions, grade inflation, failure to use achievement tests to diagnose accomplishements and the need for further homework, in short a "vicious system" which worked against the goal of quality.

What was called for in 1978 was a "complete redesign" of the system "To focus on achievement and excellence." This is what the excellence commission has called for in 1983 -- yet the speaker in 1978 was Ronald Reagan praising the leadership of one county school superintendent who took steps requiring courage and conviction in rededicating his school system to excellence.

THE RESULTS WERE RISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, A SHARP CONTRAST TO THE GENERAL DECLINE OUTLINED IN THE EXCELLENCE REPORT.

THE COMMITMENT TO QUALITY EDUCATION BEGINS IN THE OVAL OFFICE WITH OUR PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT PARENTS SHOULD HAVE MORE CHOICE IN THE PLACEMENT AND EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN. THIS IS WHY HE FAVORS TUITION TAX CREDIT FOR MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME CHILDREN. THE PRESIDENT HAS A FIRM BELIEF IN LOCAL AND STATE CONTROL OF EDUCATION. WE BOTH BELIEVE BLOCK GRANTS FOR FEDERAL EDUCATION AID TO THE STATES WILL STRENGTHEN THE STATES AND LIMIT FEDERAL CONTROLS.

I WANT TO EMPHASIZE TO ALL OF YOU, I KNOW PERSONALLY OF THE PRESIDENT'S DEEP INTEREST, DEEP CONCERN AND STRONG COMMITTMENT TO EDUCATION. HE SUPPORTED A BUDGET IN THESE TIMES OF GREAT ECONOMIC STRESS TO MAINTAIN OUR SUPPORT LEVELS OF DISADVANTAGED AND HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND STUDENT AID. I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THIS SO NO ONE HERE WILL FEEL I AM SPEAKING WITHOUT THE PRESIDENT COMPLETE SUPPORT. HE AND I BOTH FIRMLY BELIEVE OUR EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON HELPING THE STATES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES, PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND PARENTS TO MORE EFFECTIVELY DO THEIR JOBS.

I HAVE SPOKEN AT LENGTH ABOUT THE FEDERAL ROLE, THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE, AND HOW OUR POLICIES MEET THE GOALS OUTLINED IN THE COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE REPORT. LET ME ADD THAT YOUR STATE IS PROOF THE TAXPAYERS WILL SUPPORT REFORM. THE 38 PERCENT INCOME TAX INCREASE SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR BLANCHARD LAST MONTH MEANS BETTER PROSPECTS FOR THE FINANCE OF EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN. FLORIDA, MISSISSIPPI, TENNESSEE, AND CALIFORNIA ALSO HAVE SERIOUS REFORMS UNDERWAY. THEIR ABILITY TO RAISE REVENUE FOR THE REFORMS HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC POLICIES.

FIRST, TAXPAYERS THIS JULY WILL RECEIVE THE FULL BENEFIT OF THE PRESIDENT'S 25 PERCENT REDUCTION IN FEDERAL INCOME TAXES. IF YOU CAN CONVINCE YOUR TAXPAYERS AND PARENTS YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT EDUCATIONAL REFORM, THE RESOURCES ARE THERE TO CARRY THEM THROUGH. SECOND, THE ECONOMIC RECESSION WHICH WROUGHT HAVOC WITH STATE BUDGETS IS ENDING. THE INFLATION RATE FOR THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS IS UNDER FOUR PERCENT, A STARK CONTRAST TO THE DOUBLE -DIGIT INFLATION OF 1980. IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR, OUR GNP ROSE BY MORE THAN 3 PERCENT -- THE LARGEST QUARTERLY RISE IN TWO YEARS AND THE END OF FOUR YEARS OF "STAGFLATION." BEFORE THIS QUARTER, WHEN THE PRESIDENT'S POLICIES TOOK HOLD, THERE HAD BEEN NO GROWTH IN THE GNP SINCE 1979.

WE BELIEVE WE ARE HELPING CREATE AN ECONOMIC CLIMATE WHERE THE STATES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY FINANCE THE COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE REPORT.

AND THERE ARE OTHER POSITIVE SIGNS OUR ECONOMY IS ON THE MEND, FOR EXAMPLE: HOUSING STARTS ARE UP TO AN ANNUAL RATE OF MORE THAN 1.7 MILLION. AUTO SALES IN APRIL WERE UP 32.5% OVER THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR -- AND I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU WHAT THIS MEANS FOR AN INDUSTRIAL STATE LIKE MICHIGAN. MORTGAGE RATES ARE AT THEIR LOWEST POINT IN TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS, AND THE STOCK MARKET SEEMS TO REACH NEW RECORDS EVERY MONTH. UNEMPLOYMENT IS STILL TOO HIGH BUT IS FINALLY DROPPING. WE ARE ENTERING A PERIOD OF LASTING, NON-INFLATIONARY GROWTH THAT WILL MEAN A SOLID FISCAL BASE FOR EDUCATION. PER-PUPIL SPENDING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE TEN PERCENT THIS SCHOOL YEAR, WELL AHEAD OF THE RATE OF INFLATION AT LONG LAST.

TO UNITE THESE FACTORS INTO A DRIVING FORCE FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT -- PARENTAL DEMANDS AND AWARENESS, THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT, AND THE IMPROVING ECONOMY -- STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS MUST TAKE SPECIFIC STEPS. YOU MUST BE ASSERTIVE, BOLD, AND PREPARED TO OVERCOME CERTAIN POLITICAL OPPOSITION FROM ENTRENCHED INTERESTS WHO TREMBLE AT ANY PROSPECT OF A CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO.

In sumary, I argue there is a Federal role. It should be one of capacity building, to enhance the capacity of those actually in charge to do their jobs more effectively. We must offer constructive criticism as we look across State lines. We must be leaders of what the States are doing, and we must beware of the heavy hand of Federal instrusion and regulation.

This calls for State and local lawmakers, governors, governing boards and administrators to be more agressively effective than they have been in the past. And on the federal level we must also do a better job.

IV. Financing the Reforms. My fourth question: How shall we finance the sweeping reforms called for by the National Commission?

My response to this may cause you to snort with disgust. But the plain answer is that the State legislatures must levy the taxes and appropriate the money. It's that simple.

YOUR QUICK REPLY IS THAT THE STATES ARE BROKE. MY INSTANT RETORT IS: SO IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WE OUGHT NOT START PAYING TEACHERS' SALARIES AND BUYING TEXTBOOKS ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL. AND BESIDES, THE TAXES COME OUT OF THE SAME TAXPAYER'S POCKET REGARDLESS OF THE LEVEL ON WHICH WE LEVY THE TAX, SO LET'S STAY WITH THE SYSTEM WE HAVE AND DO MORE TO MAKE IT WORK. THERE IS NO PAINLESS WAY TO EXTRACT THE FUNDS FROM THE TAXPAYERS REGARDLESS OF THE LEVEL.

<u>BUT LET'S NOT ASK THE TAXPAYERS TO PAY MORE WITHOUT A GENUINE PROMISE THAT WE WILL GET THE RESULTS CALLED FOR IN THE COMMISSION REPORT.</u>

BEFORE WE PUMP ANY MORE MONEY INTO EDUCATION, THE STATE LEGISLATURES OUGHT TO EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL FOR GETTING MORE FOR THE MONEY THEY ARE NOW SPENDING. TOO OFTEN WE REWARD MEDIOCRITY AND PUNISH EXCELLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS. THIS APPLIES TO MUCH OF WHAT WE DO, FROM TEACHERS' SALARY STRUCTURE TO HOW WE APPORTION FUNDS AMONG THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS. WHEN 35 OF OUR 50 STATES CALL FOR ONLY ONE YEAR OF MATH AND ONE YEAR OF SCIENCE FOR HIGH

SCHOOL GRADUATION, WE CANNOT GO TO THE TAXPAYERS AND PLEA FOR MORE MONEY TO SUPPORT SUCH LOW STANDARDS.

V. THE TEACHER COMPETENCE PROBLEM MY FIFTH QUESTION IS: HOW DO WE SOLVE THE TEACHER COMPETENCE PROBLEM?

THE COMMISSION EMPHASIZED IN ITS REPORT THAT TEACHERS' SALARIES ARE TOO LOW--AND THEY ARE. BUT WE MUST TAKE MEASURES TO CHANGE THE SINGLE SALARY SCHEDULE. IF WE ARE GOING TO BUILD A TRULY GREAT TEACHING PROFESSION, WE MUST ADD SOME NEW DIMENSIONS TO THE TEACHING RANKS SO THAT OUR MOST DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS ARE RECOGNIZED. JUST AS WE HAVE BEEN REWARDING OUR DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS IN HIGHER ED WITH FINANCIAL REWARDS AND RECOGNITION, WE SHOULD GIVE THE SAME BENEFITS TO OUR OUTSTANDING TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. AS I HAVE SAID MANY TIMES BEFORE, WE SHOULD ESTABLISH THE POSITION OF MASTER TEACHER IN OUR SOCIETY. THIS NEW AND PRESTIGIOUS LEVEL IN THE TEACHER RANKS SHOULD COMMAND SALARY COMMENSURATE WITH ADMINISTRATORS AND SENIOR PROFESSIONALS IN OTHER FIELDS.

In reaching this goal and in seeking to extend the length of the school year and the school day, the legislatures ought to move in annual incremental steps. Each time more money is appropriated, the State lawmakers ought to set aside a sum to be used exclusively for the purpose of compensating Master Teachers. Similar action could be taken to gradually lengthen the school year. In these ways, our state lawmakers will be offering incentives for change and reform and renewal of American education as we talk of better leadership on the federal level we must not forget the powerful influence the state legislatures have. We need better leadership here. If we had had it in the past, in both the state houses and the government offices, we would not have the sorry condition we are facing today.

The point I am making is the States must be results-oriented. With a master plan for attainment of excellence, every action taken can be used to reach the outcomes prescribed in the plan.

Can we afford to spend more money on education? We cannot, if it is poured into a tired old system that has yielded to "the tidal wave of mediocrity" decried by the Commission in its report. But neither can we afford the status quo. We all know that ignorance is costly. We need to implement the changes advocated by the Commission and accompany each step with the added funds needed to reach the desired outcomes.

VI. The Role of Higher Education. My sixth question is: What is the role of higher education in promoting excellence?

First of all, higher education educates our educators. Consequently it must accept a large part of the blame for inadequate teacher education. The Commission report refers to a decline in college admission requirements. Higher education has been asking far less from today's high school graduates, and it is getting it. The schools need all the support and help they can get from colleges and universities. For too long there has been a studied neglect and an intellectual chasm between the schools and colleges and universities of this country. The schools need and deserve a high priority of support from higher education.

Summary and Challenges

Drawing from my opportunity to look at education nationwide, I would like to conclude with the following challenges:

- For Governors to establish task forces or blue ribbo' educational excellence commissions in their states to recommend changes in graduation requirements, teacher performance and pay, and other reforms;

o For university governing boards to call for a top-to-bottom review of their teacher preparation programs and their remedial education programs; their admission requirements, and the quality of service and help to schools;

o For the Presidents, Chancellors and Trustees of our Colleges and Universities, and their faculties to bring liberal education back to its original purpose: to provide an education which challenges the intellect, develops learning skills, conveys the complexity of the world we live in, and forms a base for an individual to become a life-long learner and, to provide retraining to those individuals whose occupations will not have a place in the high-tech America of the future. These institutions must do more to strengthen and reform teacher education programs. They must make teacher education a higher priority.

o For Governors to recommend and for state legislatures to enact new laws to provide incentives for master teacher salaries, for curriculum reform, for more time to learn, and for other reforms that are absolutely essential;

o FOR GOVERNORS TO BUDGET AND FOR LEGISLATURES TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THESE NEEDED REFORMS;

o FOR ALL OF THE SCHOLARLY, SCIENTIFIC AND LEARNED SOCIETIES TO CONVENE TASK FORCES TO SEE WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS THEY CAN MAKE IN HELPING THE NEW BASICS MOVE FORWARD WITH THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SCHOLARSHIP AND LEARNING. WE ESPECIALLY NEED HELP FROM THESE ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS IN TEXTBOOK REFORMS AND FOR UPGRADING OUR TEACHING MATERIALS.

o FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP NEW TEACHER EMPLOYMENT, PAY AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS; WE NEED SCHOOL BOARDS THAT WILL GOVERN ... NOT JUST PRESIDE OVER THE STATUS QUO (DEFINED AS "LATIN FOR THE MESS WE ARE IN RIGHT NOW.")

o FOR STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION TO FORGET THEIR DIFFERENCES AND EXPLORE WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER AS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION -- AS THEIR NATIONAL COUNTERPARTS ARE NOW DOING.

o FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND UNIONS TO TAKE A NEW LOOK AT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THEIR MEMBERS FOR ENCOURAGING AND IMPLEMENTING EXCELLENCE IN THE PROFESSION AND IN THE CLASSROOM. WE NEED SUPPORT FOR THESE REFORMS ... ESPECIALLY FOR THE MASTER TEACHER CONCEPT.

o For the private sector to expand its educational efforts in cooperation with the President's Private Sector Initiative, especially in the areas of retraining, the new technology and, hands-on job experience.

o For parents to get actively involved in school affairs through existing PTA's or in other community groups dedicated to providing the best education possible for your children. (We need parental commitment to excellence, and we urge widespread attention to the message to parents found in the Commission report.)

o For students to demand academic excellence through new attention and activities such as literary clubs, and academic coaches," and public acknowledgement through new school events like the "academic olympics." Students need to emphasize that the new basics are the highest priority. Student leaders should help generate peer group priorities and pressure for academic excellence.

Conclusion

Americans have long prided themselves on the excellence and the opportunity that has traditionally typified their centuries long obsession with improving our educational enterprise.

INDEED DEMOCRACY, REPUBLICAN FORMS OF GOVERNMENT, THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, OUR HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING AND OUR MODERN INDUSTRIALIZED-URBANIZED SOCIETY WERE BASED ON, INDEED WERE PREDICATED UPON THE PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS AND A FIRST RATE, SUPERIOR EDUCATION. WE HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TODAY TO REFORM AND RENEW AMERICAN EDUCATION. LET'S ALL JOIN IN TO ESTABLISH AMERICA AS THE LEARNING SOCIETY DESCRIBED IN THE COMMISSION'S REPORT! WITH LEADERS LIKE YOU, WITH GOVERNORS AS CONCERNED AND COMMITTED AS GOVERNORS BLANCHARD, ALEXANDER AND A NUMBER OF THEIR COLLEAGUES, THE FUTURE CAN BE EVEN BRIGHTER FOR OUR COUNTRY.

I HOPE ALL OF US WILL RESPOND TO THIS REPORT, TELLINGLY CALLED, "A NATION AT RISK" AND PLEDGE TO DO OUR BEST TO REVERSE THIS DECLINE IN ACHIEVEMENT, STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS.

# # # # # #